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ABSTRACT

Basic to Tiedeman's approach to career development and decision making is the assumption that one is responsible for one's own behavior because one has the capacity for choice and lives in a world which is not deterministic. Tiedeman, a cognitive-developmental theorist, views continuity of development as internal or psychological while discontinuity has a sociological or environmental basis caused by the nature of the structure of society. In Tiedeman's theory, an instrumental cause behind one's behavior is the experience or anticipation of discontinuity and discomfort which precipitates purposeful action and decision making. Effective resolution of life's discontinuities leads to increased control over one's behavior, or a "sense of agency", and the eventual expression of one's identity through a personally-determined career. In the process of making a decision, an individual progresses through seven sequential stages: (1) exploration, (2) crystallization, (3) choice, (4) clarification, (5) induction, (6) reformation, and (7) integration. Decision-making styles may be: planning, intuitive, impulsive, agonizing, delaying, paralytic, fatalistic, and compliant. Planning is viewed as the most effective style with intuitive sometimes being effective. Another classification, reflecting various degrees of personal responsibility and individual utilization of rational planning strategies, is: (1) planning, (2) intuitive, and (3) dependent. (EA)

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Tiedeman's Approach to Career Development*

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"Each man owns his own life. I only hope that he is the architect of his future as he lives it."
Tiedeman

In this statement, Tiedeman establishes a philosophico-value position as to the nature of man, and as to one's role in influencing the lives of others. Central to this position is the assumption that man is responsible for his own behavior because he has the capacity for choice and lives in a world which is not deterministic. The role of educators and others in the helping professions is to help people accept this responsibility, or owning of their lives, and to develop their capacity for choice, thus achieving greater control over their own behavior and over the environment.

Becoming the architect of one's future means leading one's life purposefully, that is, creating and discovering meaning in one's life through purposeful action; in short, becoming an effective decision-maker. The focus of Tiedeman's approach to career development is thus on the process of decision-making; that is, the nature of this process; the factors influencing the development of this process; and the means whereby this process can be enhanced or improved.

At the outset, it should be stated that decision-making is not solely an objective, coldly rational, conscious process. It involves fantasy, emotion, volition, impulse, as well as cognition. Even cognition involves implicit or tacit knowing as one strives to make explicitly known what is implicitly sensed or felt as the inner facts/data of one's experiencing. While cognition and

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conscious volition are dominant in this process (and, indeed, are inherent in the term, itself) to deny the other components of men's psychological functioning is to conceive of man as a bifurcated creature in which reason and emotion operate independently.

In order to understand the decision-making process, one must place it in its developmental context. Tiedeman can be regarded as a cognitive-developmental theorist, whose work is consistent with that of Bruner, Piaget, Havighurst, Erikson, and Allport. The major issue here is whether psychological development is a continuous or a discontinuous process. Perhaps the issue has been a controversy because of the influence of Freud and his insistence that adult behavior is inextricably linked to early psychosexual experiences through a series of unconscious transformations or displacements.

In Tiedeman's view, continuity of development is seen as internal or psychological; while discontinuity is sociologically or environmentally caused by the nature of the structure of society. That is, life's discontinuities are imposed upon us as we find ourselves in relatively new physical and social environments. The child who must leave the known and protective environment of the home to enter pre-school or kindergarten; the pre-adolescent who finds himself in a homeroom part of the day, but with different peers and teachers the rest of the day; the high school student, the college student, the worker beginning a new job; all experience life's discontinuities. Psychologically, the basis of stability or continuity is one's sense of identity or self, based on the accumulated meaning of one's past experience; while sociologically, one is confronted with discontinuity or change in one's situation or environment, with its attendant expectations or demands. While life's discontinuities refer to our rapidly changing environment, there is a sense in which discontinuity is experienced within self. Part of the self, one's identity, is maintained

during the period of an environmental discontinuity, while other parts of self change, thus allowing for learning and modification of self in the context of a relatively stable, or less rapidly changing identity.

While there is no clear motivating principle behind man's behavior in the sense of a formal cause, in Tiedeman's theory, there is certainly an instrumental cause: the experience of discontinuity and the discomfort generated by finding oneself in a strange, new world, or by the anticipation that one will soon be in such a world. This discomfort precipitates purposeful action and decision-making. At the same time, there is a final cause in that there is a consideration of goals, a selection of a goal, and goal directed behavior, which implies a teleological motivating principle. In any case, however one conceives of man's motivation, the means whereby one passes through life's discontinuities is the focus of the theory.

When a person experiences a discontinuity, he engages in "purposing behavior" or purposeful action. He attends to what is "currently experienced," his present state, both internally and in the situation. Then he considers what is "currently desired" or develops a concept of a future, more desirable state. Alternative possible goals emerge from the consideration of what is desired, and one of these goals is experienced as more valuable than the others, relative to what is currently desired. The individual develops a plan of action to attain this goal and then implements this plan. Finally, he compares his actual behavior with his expected behavior in carrying out the plan. This feedback is used to consider if he is attaining the goal and if it is still currently desired; or if a different goal and plan of action is now experienced as more desirable.

The criterion of effectiveness for purposeful action is the degree to which this action resolves a discontinuity of experience in a way which enables the individual to achieve a greater degree of control over his own behavior and over

his environment. The result of successful purposeful action is an increased "sense of agency" experienced by the person. Finally, this increased agency fosters the owning of responsibility for one's behavior and further purposeful action.

The successful resolution of a discontinuity depends upon the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the information the person utilizes during purposeful action. "Information" is used here in the sense of being "formed-within"; that is, the translation of data/facts into personally significant meaning. Data/facts refers to both the environment and the self, and it is the translation of these internally which personalizes experience and generates purposing behavior.

A final requirement for effective purposeful action is the person's ability to maintain a delicate balance between commitment on the one hand and tentativeness on the other. Commitment involves an active relationship to society whereby one's identity is expressed through a "personally-determined career." An attitude of tentativeness results from the realization that the world is relativistic, not absolute, and that the future holds contingencies which are not always predictable nor under one's control. Commitment with tentativeness thus enables one to risk decision and action, yet allows change in what is currently desired as the future unfolds in the present.

To summarize thus far, Tiedeman's approach contains a view of man as responsible for his behavior and capable of choosing through purposeful action. Life confronts the individual with discontinuities of experience which require resolution, and effective resolution leads to an increased sense of agency and the expression of one's identity through a personally-determined career.

Within this macroscopic context, we can proceed to examine the decision-making process, which is the microscopic view of purposeful action. Since this aspect of Tiedeman's theory is more well known and written about, it will

be treated only briefly in this paper.

The decision-making process is one of cognitive differentiation and integration, set in motion by the anticipation of a discontinuity or a problem to be resolved. In the process of making a decision, the individual progresses through seven sequential stages. The first four stages are anticipatory, or preliminary to implementing a decision; whereas, the last three occur during the implementation, or living out of a decision. These seven stages can be described as follows:

1. Exploration

   This stage is marked by random, exploratory considerations. It is characterized by generalized, vague concerns with little or no progress toward choice. Knowledge of self and the occupational world is a felt need, but the individual has developed no strategy or plan of action for satisfying this need. There is an absence or near absence of negative choices (exclusions from the range of possibilities). This is accompanied by vague anxieties and doubts about the future.

2. Crystallization

   This stage reprsents progress toward, but not attainment of choice. The individual recognizes altenative possible choices and at least some of the consequences of these alternatives. Conflicts are recognized; advantages and disadvantages are weighed; and the bases for a decision are being developed, at least implicitly. The process of narrowing down the range of possibilities through negative choices is operating. False steps and inappropriate earlier decisions are recognized and used as bases for further decision.

3. Choice

   This stage represents a definite commitment with some degree of certainty to a particular goal. It is accompanied by expressions of satisfaction and relief for having made the commitment. The individual may focus on aspects or characteristics of self which are evidence to him that he has made an appropriate decision. This stage further represents a swing from the pessimism characteristic of the exploratory stage to a kind of naive optimism about the future. The individual usually expresses a singleness of purpose and an unswerving attitude of goal direction, as well as eagerness and impatience to reach the goal. Focus upon the consequences of the decision and further planning are not yet in evidence.

4. Clarification

   This stage represents a process of closure in which the individual is involved in clarification and elaboration of the consequences of

his commitment, as well as in planning the details and next steps to be taken to follow through on the commitment. (Some of these consequences of commitment may well have been considered prior to commitment in the crystallization stage; yet, in this stage these considerations are more imminent and personally relevant; whereas, earlier they were more distant and hypothetical.) In addition, the individual is usually engaged in a process of elaboration and perfection of his self-image and image of the future. Although planning the overt action to carry out the commitment is characteristic of this stage, the overt action itself may be delayed until the environmental conditions are appropriate for action.

5. Induction

This stage marks the beginning of the implementation of a decision; the point at which the individual comes into reality contact with a new environment. The individual begins the process of accommodation or adjustment to a new group of people, and a new situation or context in the living out of his decision. The individual's primary mode of interaction is passive or receptive. He is hesitant and is looking for cues from others in the group to determine what the group's values and goals are, and what the group's expectations of him are. While there is a general defense of self and a giving up of aspects or self to group purpose, the individual needs to feel some level of acceptance of his uniqueness by the group. Gradually, he identifies with the group through the assimilation of his individual values and goals into the group's values, goals, and purposes. This stage ends when a person becomes aware of his being accepted by the group.

6. Reformation

In this stage, the individual's primary mode of interaction is assertive, rather than passive or receptive. He is highly involved in the group, enjoins the group to do better, and acts upon the group in order to bring its values, goals, and purposes into greater conformance with his own values and goals (which have become somewhat modified during induction). He also acts upon the out-group to bring their view of his identification with the in-group into greater consistency with his own view. There is a strong sense of self, which is somewhat lacking in objectivity. At the same time, self is abandoned to solution and group purpose. The result of this stage is a modification of the group's values, goals, and purposes.

7. Integration

In this stage older group members react against the new member's force for change, which causes the individual to compromise or modify his intentions. This results in a greater objectivity towards self and towards the group's purposes. A synthesis is achieved which both the individual and the group strive to maintain through collaborative activity. The individual is satisfied, at least temporarily, and he has an image of self as successful, while the group also considers him successful.

While the Tiedeman model assumes that all individuals pass through these seven sequential stages in the process of making a decision, there are individual differences in one's mode of perceiving and reacting to discontinuities or a problem to be resolved. These are regarded as characteristic response modes and are called decision-making styles. Eight styles are identified: Planning, Intuitive, Impulsive, Agonizing, Delaying, Paralytic, Fatalistic, and Compliant. Planning is viewed as the most effective style, while Intuitive may sometimes be effective. The remaining styles are regarded as ineffective or counter-productive. This author has collapsed these styles into three categories, based upon, 1) the degree to which the individual takes personal responsibility for decision-making, versus projecting responsibility outward toward fate, peers, and authorities; and 2) the degree to which the individual utilizes rational planning strategies versus emotional, intuitive strategies in decision-making. These three styles can be described as follows:

Planning

> This style is characterized by the ability to recognize the consequences of earlier decisions for later decisions. It requires an extended time perspective in which several sequential decisions are viewed as a means-ends chain. The individual anticipates the need to make decisions in the future and prepares for them by seeking information about self and the anticipated situation or context. The individual's decisions are carried through deliberately and logically. They are effective to the degree that accurate information about the situation is acquired and the individual's self-appraisal is realistic. This style represents the ideal of the self-actualizing decision-maker; one who is "the architect of his own future as he lives it."

Intuitive

> As in the planning style, the intuitive decision-maker accepts responsibility for his decision-making. The intuitive style, however, involves little anticipation of the future, information-seeking behavior or logical weighing of factors. Rather it is characterized by the use of fantasy, attention to present feelings, and an emotional self-awareness as the bases for decision-making. Commitment to a course of action is reached relatively quickly, and its basic "rightness" is felt internally. Often the individual cannot state explicitly how he decided.

This style is less likely to result in effective decision-making than the planning style, due to fluctuations over time in the individual's internal state, and to limited capacity to accurately represent an unfamiliar situation or context in fantasy.

Dependent

Unlike the planning and intuitive styles, the dependent style is characterized by a denial of personal responsibility for decision-making and a projection of that responsibility outside of self. The individual is heavily influenced by the expectations and desires authorities and peers have of him. He tends to be passive and compliant, and to have a high need for social approval. He perceives the environment as restrictive, with limited alternatives available to him. While this style may reduce the immediate anxiety associated with decision-making, it is likely to result, ultimately, in lack of fulfillment or personal satisfaction.

Although these styles are considered to be characteristic, that is, to generalize across situations and problems, it is likely that individuals differ with respect to their adherence to one style to the exclusion of others.

We have attempted to summarize in this paper the major components of Tiedeman's approach to career development. We regard the approach as an open-ended approach, not a closed, formal theory. Tiedeman and others continue to develop the approach through modifying what has been developed, as well as adding new dimensions. In addition, practitioners are attempting to utilize the approach in conceptualizing student's career development and in designing means of facilitating that development. One such application is the possibility of teaching students the decision-making process itself, of training in more effective decision-making, and of modifying decision-making styles.

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